

E. L. MASCALL

COMMENTS ON

LAMBETH 1958 AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

'Not for the first time the Anglican Communion is greatly in Dr. Mascall's debt. Comment is free, I am thankful to say, in the Church of England, and comment from a responsible theologian is welcome at any time. The bishops themselves will welcome it for none knows better than they the conditions of rush and hurry under which they had to work at Lambeth.'

—KENNETH N. ROSS

Vicar of All Saints', Margaret Street

'Doctor Mascall will find many who agree with his questioning of the authority of the Lambeth Conference.'

—F. P. COLEMAN

Secretary of the Church Union

'We strongly recommend Dr. Mascall's survey of the œcumenical sections of the Lambeth report.'

—*Faith and Unity*

Lambeth 1958 and Christian Unity

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Lambeth 1958 and Christian Unity¹

BY

E. L. MASCALL

I. The Report and its Authority

AT the Press Conference which was held at Church House, Westminster, on the eve of the publication of the Report of the Lambeth Conference, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury is recorded as having spoken as follows:

The quality of the Report, in my judgment, is extremely high. It is not so much the Report which is on trial but those who read it. A great deal in the Report is of the highest significance: whether it is perceived or digested depends on those who read it. . . . I know that a lot of this will not get home among those who do not want to resolve discord, but the Report is speaking not primarily to those who like playing about with ideas, but to ordinary men and women—Churchmen, Christians in the wider sense and citizens generally.²

I cannot, however, believe that Dr. Fisher really intended to imply that the Report carried such an obvious weight of intrinsic or extrinsic authority that any one who ventured to detect any serious faults in it would thereby put himself *ipso facto* in the wrong; this would be to claim for the Report an authority not less than that which in the Roman Church is commonly attributed to a Papal encyclical. Nor, in view of the intricate theological issues involved, is it easy to suppose

¹ The following abbreviations are used: C.S.I., Church of South India; C.I.P.B.C., Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon; C.I.B.C., Church of India, Burma and Ceylon; U.C.N.I., United Church of Northern India.

² See the *Church Times* of August 29th, 1958, p. 3.



that large parts at least of the Report are not addressed primarily to those who will have some appreciation of these issues and who, in no necessarily pejorative sense, might be considered to have a particular concern with 'ideas.' I doubt, for example, whether 'citizens generally' will be able to work up much enthusiasm about the pages in the Report which deal with the unification of the ministry in North India and Pakistan. In any case, being convinced as I am that the section of the Report which is devoted to the subject of Church Unity and the Church Universal leaves a number of theological issues insufficiently clarified, I should be reluctant to assume that His Grace intended to discourage its examination by theologians. Such an assumption would suggest an uneasy suspicion that the Conference might be discredited by such examination, and it ought not lightly to be made. Before proceeding, however, to comment upon this section, it will I think be necessary to make some remarks of a more general kind.

In the first place we cannot ignore the fact that, while no formal or canonical authority whatever attaches to the Lambeth Conference and its Resolutions, they have, as has been stressed on many occasions, immense moral effect throughout the Anglican Communion and even outside. This is an extremely dangerous status for any institution and its pronouncements to acquire, for it tends to separate power from accountability; it gives enormous influence to policies and programmes which cannot be canonically questioned since they have no canonical existence.

The reader who has only the Report to guide him will, I think, be puzzled, as I was when I first read it, by the fact that no indication is given of the number of votes cast for and against any resolution. He will, of course, assume that a bare majority of the votes cast was sufficient to ensure the adoption of the Resolution in question, but in the absence of any figures he will find it very difficult to guess how much moral authority to attach to it, and this will seem extremely unsatisfactory since moral authority is the only authority that the Conference, not being a legislative body, can claim.

However, His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, as reported in *The Times* of August 26th, has gone some way towards clearing up this uncertainty by his statement to the Press Conference that no vote was taken on any Resolution except Resolution 106, which deals with nuclear warfare. (It is surprising that so important a piece of information had to be communicated informally by word of mouth to the Press and was not included in the official Report of the Conference; one must conclude that it was omitted by inadvertence.) Such remarkable unanimity might seem to be more characteristic of gatherings behind the iron curtain than in free countries until one realizes that the great majority of the Resolutions are either so obvious in their statements or so non-committal in their recommendations that it is very difficult to see how any Churchman could dispute them. It would hardly seem necessary to assemble over three hundred bishops from forty-six countries in order to secure agreement that the Bible is deeply relevant to the modern world. There are, nevertheless, a small number of Resolutions dealing with matters on which the Bishops are known to be, like other Churchmen, very much divided, and one would feel more confident that the issues with which they deal had been thoroughly understood and discussed if their adoption had not been so uniformly unanimous; in a large gathering a majority of 95 per cent is often more impressive than one of 100. Nobody, of course, is going to suspect Anglican bishops of sharp practices, but it would be easier to assess the moral authority of the Conference's Resolutions if one knew whether the reason why there was no voting was that there was no expressed desire for it or whether it was due to a policy of unanimity at all costs. Perhaps if voting had been both encouraged and recorded we should be able now to read a set of Resolutions which would be less unanimous but more significant, and in some cases less obvious.

There is a further general consideration for which there seems to be both *a priori* and *a posteriori* evidence. The Report consists of something like 100,000 words; the Conference consisted of 310 bishops and sat for five weeks. Any one who has any experience of reports and committees knows that

it is quite impossible for such a body to give adequate consideration to such a Report in such a period of time. Quite inevitably reports of committees will be drawn up hastily and will be scanned without their full implications being seen, resolutions will be voted on without their terms being fully understood, emotional appeals by enthusiasts will frequently take the place of thorough and judicious study, fatigue and inexperience in debate will lead to uninformed acquiescence. Nor does a study of Church History lead to the conclusion that assemblies of ecclesiastics are exempt from the failings to which human frailty in general is prone: indeed their very conviction of the rightness of their cause may lead ecclesiastics into hasty and even unscrupulous action to a greater extent than a more secular gathering might manifest. Lobbying, rail-roading, concealment of relevant information, unscrupulous appeal to the emotions, all these have played a part in the Church's councils in the past and we have no warrant for assuming that Lambeth Conferences are untouched by them. May I add that I have no intention of making specific assertions and no evidence on which to base them; I wish only to endorse the conviction expressed in Article XXI that 'General Councils . . . (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God) . . . may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God,' and to suggest that Lambeth Conferences are no more exempt from error than General Councils. Few of the bishops at Lambeth were trained theologians, and they met without the assistance of theological assessors to consider matters many of which were of extreme theological complexity. To hold that the Report ought to be exempt from the most detailed criticism would be to claim for it a virtual infallibility, and I cannot believe that His Grace's words to the Press Conference were intended to make such a claim. That the quality of the Report in places high I am quite ready to admit,³ though if quality rather than moral authority was the prime consideration I think as good a document could have been produced in a simpler way. Unfortunately, the particular

³ One might instance the section on the Book of Common Prayer.

section of the Report with which I am concerned, namely that which deals with Church Unity and the Church Universal, seems to me to be theologically one of the weakest. As it affects the future development and indeed the very existence of the Anglican Communion, I shall examine in some detail the parts of it which raise the most vital issues; this is all that the space at my disposal will allow.

In this, as in other sections, it is important to distinguish between the Report which a particular Committee presented to the Conference, and the Resolutions which the Conference adopted after considering it. It is only the latter which can claim the authority of the Conference; just what the extent of that authority is I have pointed out already. The individual Committee-Reports have only the authority of the Committees which respectively produced them, but it is not entirely clear whether every member of a Committee is committed to everything in that Committee's Report. In no case is there a minority report or an expression of individual dissent, nor on the other hand is it explicitly stated that the Report is unanimous, though perhaps this is understood.

II. *The Church of South India*

On the subject of the Church of South India, the Committee speaks in terms of unqualified approval, which might be thought somewhat excessive if applied to any part of the Anglican Communion itself. No misgivings are expressed, no guidance is given as to the future development of the C.S.I., and it is even suggested that the C.S.I. has more understanding of the true nature of episcopacy than what is described as 'the Church in the West.' This unrestrained panegyric is somewhat surprising, and for the sake of the C.S.I., quite apart from any other reasons, one cannot but regret the absence of any kindly and constructive counsel and criticism. Three points call for special comment.

(1) In January 1958 the C.S.I. adopted a radically revised Ordinal, which provoked alarmed and violent reactions in some Anglican circles, especially in the periodical called *The Dome* (issue of March 1958). This Ordinal was in its general

structure closer to primitive models than that of the Church of England; and I think the Committee was right in adjudging it 'adequate to secure a regular and valid ministry.' (The use of the words 'regular' and 'valid' is interesting, in view of the widespread tendency in recent years to repudiate them; personally I find them welcome.) The Reverend Bernard Wigan, who is a liturgical scholar of distinction, has defended the rite, while criticizing some details, in *Faith and Unity* for Summer 1958.

(2) There is no reference to the fact that the C.S.I. has never given a satisfactory reply to the six points which the 'Derby Committee' in June 1946 listed as likely to be essential if full communion was ultimately to be reached with the C.S.I. and which were explicitly set out in the corresponding part of the Lambeth Conference Report of 1948. If the six points were to be dropped this should surely have been brought to the notice of the Conference; they should not have been passed over in silence.

(3) It is well known that in the C.S.I. it is a common practice to use unfermented fruit juice at the Eucharist and to pour back into the cruet or bottle for future use the remains of the consecrated species; that this is so had been explicitly brought to the notice of members of the Committee. It is thus astounding that, side by side with the unqualified commendation which the Committee gave to C.S.I., no place was found to deprecate these practices, the more so as three members of the Committee (the Bishops of Derby, Exeter and Guildford) had as recently as October 1957 insisted, in a debate in the Canterbury Convocation, upon the necessity of fermented wine in the Eucharist. The Bishop of Exeter, so the *Church Times* of October 4th reported, 'expressed concern for the Ecumenical Movement if the Church of England, unlike the rest of Western Christendom, did not regard the fermented juice of the grape as part of the essential matter of the Eucharist.'

So much, then, for the Report of the Committee; it can only be described as uncritical. In Resolution 18, 'the Conference welcomes and endorses the Report.'

III. Union in Ceylon and North India

I now turn to the part of the Report which deals with the *Scheme of Church Union in Ceylon* (Lanka) and the *Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan*. I must assume that these are familiar to the reader, though there is reason to doubt whether they were entirely familiar to all the members of the Lambeth Conference. In contrast with South India, both of these provide for the unification of the ministries of the uniting bodies by a special form of service, and both envisage relations of full communion from the start between the new Churches and the Churches of the Anglican Communion. The *Plan* has the added complication that it provides for the unification of the Anglican and American-Methodist episcopates.

The Committee-Report describes the doctrinal statements of both the *Scheme* and the *Plan* as 'unexceptionable.' 'No Anglican,' it affirms, 'need entertain any doubt concerning the orthodoxy of the Faith of the resulting Churches' (p. 2.31). If the statements on 'The Faith of the Church' in the *Scheme* and 'The Doctrines of the Church' in the *Plan* can be taken at their face value this affirmation might seem to be justified, though it must be noted that, while both the *Scheme* and the *Plan* 'accept' the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, only the *Scheme* orders either of them to be used in preparation for Baptism and Confirmation; a communicant in North India or Pakistan may, so far as I can see, never have heard of either. Both *Scheme* and *Plan* allow any of the confessional documents of the uniting Churches to be used after the union, though the *Scheme* inserts the proviso 'so long as it is consistent with the doctrinal standards officially set forth by the Church of Lanka' (i.e. at some time or times in the unspecified future). The *Plan* is more explicit, in providing a list of these documents. First, from the Anglican side there is contributed Declaration I of the Constitution of the C.I.P.B.C., though not, it may be noticed, the Prayer-Book Catechism. (This omission was brought to the notice of some members of the Committee, but without effect.) Secondly, there is the detailed confession of Faith of one of the uniting

bodies, the United Church of Northern India, itself a union of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. And thirdly, there is a blank space for the insertion of further doctrinal statements. The document contributed by the U.C.N.I. merits close attention, as the *Plan* allows its use for the instruction of the faithful. It consists of twelve articles of a markedly Protestant kind. Article IX, on salvation, makes no mention of the Church. Article X, on the Sacraments, refrains from any suggestion that Christ is received in the Lord's Supper and explicitly declares that 'the benefits of the Sacraments are not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only from the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them.' The Preamble to this Confession contains an astounding statement commending 'as worthy exponents of the Word of God and as systems of doctrine to be taught in our Churches and seminaries' the Westminster Confession, the Confession and Canons of the Synod of Dort, the Heidelberg Catechism, Luther's Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession. Some of these are Calvinist, some are Lutheran, and they are not in fact mutually consistent. Their inclusion is the more surprising, since one is always told that Indian Christians are determined above all else not to be shackled by the controversies and attitudes of sixteenth century Europe. The Lambeth Committee has, however, discovered the primary reason for their inclusion and for that of Declaration I of the Constitution of C.I.P.B.C. : it is 'to secure the legal continuity of the united Church . . . and for the safeguarding of property.' It goes on to express a hope that the new Church will in due course issue its own statements of faith, but no indication whatever has been given that this is in contemplation and I find it difficult to believe that a new Church four-fifths of whose members are non-Anglicans will pay very much heed to a hope expressed by an Anglican assembly before it came into existence.

I must confess that this revelation has given me a greater moral shock than anything else in the Lambeth Conference Report. The assumption that the primary purpose of con-

fessions of faith is not to express the Christian's faith in his Redeemer but to secure his Church's property is novel and, in my opinion, quite outrageous. If it is accepted as a legitimate principle we shall never be able to place reliance on the doctrinal affirmations of any religious body; it will always be open to it to say 'Of course, we don't really believe this, but we have to go on asserting it in order to keep our property.' I think that the ordinary men and women to whom Dr. Fisher tells us the Report is primarily directed will feel that a body ought no longer to keep its property if it no longer holds the doctrines for whose propagation it acquired it.

The most controversial part of this section of the Report is undoubtedly that dealing with the services for the unification of the ministry. One of the gravest defects in both the *Scheme* and the *Plan* is an unresolved confusion between the relationship of an ordained minister to the Church of God and his relation to the local Church; supposing for the sake of argument that the procedure in the *Plan* does in fact unify the ministry, it is still not clear whether the minister is a minister of the Church of God or only of the Church of North India. This is the one criticism of the *Scheme* and the *Plan* which Lambeth has taken really seriously; the Committee-Report strongly urges that, in the formulas of unification, mention of the Church of God should precede mention of the local Church of Lanka, North India or Pakistan, and in the case of the *Plan* asks for other rearrangements too. However, even with these alterations I am gravely doubtful about the validity of the whole procedure. I think that, with the change proposed, the Ceylon method would in fact produce a valid ministry from the Catholic point of view, especially having regard to the explicit assertion in the *Scheme* of the intention to 'continue and reverently to use and esteem the threefold ministry of Bishop, Presbyter and Deacon *which existed in the undivided Church.*' But I must recognize that many responsible Anglicans are gravely doubtful whether the Catholic ministry can be conferred by anything other than the regular rite of ordination by a bishop and that the whole notion of unification ceremonies is novel and precarious. In

the case of the *Plan* my doubts are much graver. In the first place, the Anglican and Methodist bishops come into the *Plan* on exactly the same footing and participate in the unification ceremony in exactly the same way: I am not happy about the distinction between 'the special *link* with the Episcopate of the primitive Church which the Anglican Communion *claims* to have preserved' and 'the spiritual heritage of the Episcopal branch of the Methodist Communion.' 'Link' is not a theological term and may refer to nothing but a purely physical continuity; and what precisely happens to an Anglican bishop when he enters into the spiritual heritage of the Episcopal Methodists and why this needs the kind of ceremony envisaged I am at a loss to conceive. It was moreover brought to the attention of some members of the Committee that the 1957 edition of the *Plan* omits the assertion of the 1953 edition that 'in the consecration of Bishops continuity with the historic episcopate shall be effectively maintained,' but the Committee's Report makes no reference to this omission.

One of the most serious obstacles presented by the *Plan* to Catholics has been the explicit assertion of the *Plan* that the unification-service is 'not re-ordination.' One of the bishops who was a member of the Lambeth Committee told me some years ago that he interpreted this as meaning 'not re-ordination, but ordination,' from the Anglican point of view, and this reflection has calmed the consciences of other Catholic-minded Anglicans. However, at a Conference in India in August 1957 Archdeacon Sully declared that such an interpretation was 'explicitly excluded' and, although he was not speaking officially, there can be little doubt that the readiness of the non-Anglicans in India to proceed with the *Plan* was largely due to this assurance. Perhaps it was with this in mind that the Lambeth Conference's Committee asserted that 'From the Anglican point of view . . . the rite is intended to convey everything of value in the Anglican ministry, including the tradition of episcopal ordination.' The last five words of this sentence have a peculiarly odd and unnatural ring. Like many other words in the Report the

word 'tradition' has both a theological and a popular use, and it is not clear which sense it is intended to bear here and what in any case its force is. 'Including episcopal ordination' would have been quite clear; it would have gone far to reassure Catholic-minded Anglicans, but it would have gravely deterred Archdeacon Sully's non-Anglicans. Is it legitimate to suspect that the word 'tradition' was deliberately chosen as being ambiguous, so that, for example, the Bishop of Exeter could endorse the Report without denying his assertion in a recent book that 'the absolutely necessary celebrant of the Eucharist is a bishop or priest' (*The Celebrant and Ministers of the Eucharist*, p. 39), while Archdeacon Sully could continue to tell the non-Anglicans in India that the Anglicans had no intention of ordaining them? Until this doubt is satisfactorily resolved I do not see that one can possibly accept the proposed unification ceremony.

The Committee makes other recommendations and expresses other aspirations. In order to ensure the validity of baptism it trusts that the word 'sprinkling' will be taken to imply the flowing of the water over the candidate. It hopes that episcopal confirmation will spread and that confirmation will be regarded primarily as a means whereby the Holy Spirit is given and not only as an admission to communicant status. It hopes that the *Plan* will restrict the use of the word 'member' to the baptized. It hopes that the new Churches in North India and Pakistan will not reordain a minister who recommences his ministry after a period of retirement, and says that this would safeguard what is for Anglicans a very important principle. It deprecates the ordination of women. But only in this last case does it suggest that a rejection of its recommendations would jeopardize relations with the Anglican Communion.

Space will not allow of further comments on this section of the Report, though such comments might well be made. We must now see what the Conference did about it.

In Resolutions 22 and 23 the Conference recommended the Committee's amendments and advised the Anglican Churches to enter into full communion with the Church of Lanka on its inauguration. In Resolution 24 it 'wholeheartedly desired'

that the *Plan* should go forward, 'wholly shared' the desire of C.I.P.B.C. for full communion between the Anglican Churches and the new Churches of North India and Pakistan, and 'believed' that full communion would be possible if the recommendations concerning the unification service were adopted; it also asked the Archbishop to appoint a small committee of bishops to consult if needed with C.I.P.B.C. One or two comments are called for.

First, although the prophecy of full communion with North India and Pakistan is conditional on the modifications suggested in the unification ceremony, no such condition is expressed in the advice about Ceylon, although the main modification is the same in both cases. The omission may be due to inadvertence, but inadvertence in such a serious matter weakens one's confidence in the Conference's ability to handle its business efficiently. Secondly, although the Committee requested a number of modifications in the *Plan*, some of which, such as those relating to baptism and the retirement of ministers, were declared to be of great importance, the Resolution makes full communion conditional only on the modifications in the ceremony of unification. This is clearly most unsatisfactory. Again, I do not know whether the omission is deliberate or accidental, but there is reason to suppose that some of the bishops were under the impression that a more stringent form of words had been adopted.

Thirdly, and most importantly, it would be imprudent in the extreme if the C.I.P.B.C. were to enter into either of these reunions without previously submitting the schemes in their final form to those bodies in each of the Anglican Churches with which the decision whether to enter into full communion would lie, in order to discover whether that decision would be affirmative or negative. One would naturally have assumed that this would be the case, and the Bishop of Colombo recently reminded his Diocesan Council of a Resolution which it passed in 1949 to the effect that before the inauguration of the union an assurance of full communion should be obtained from the Church of England, the C.I.B.C. and the majority of the Anglican provinces (*Faith and Unity*, Summer 1958,

p. 4). I presume this still stands, but I am startled by being told, by one of the bishops at Lambeth, that it is assumed that the North India Plan will be put into operation without further reference to the Anglican provinces, simply on the strength of the belief expressed by 'the Conference' in Resolution 24, in the confidence that, even if the Lambeth Conference had no authority to commit any Anglican province, no province would be so disrespectful as to 'go back' on it. I have already pointed out that, in the absence of voting, the degree of moral authority to which any resolution of the Conference is entitled is anyone's guess, but the suggestion is in any case alarming. It needs to be made quite clear that the decision about full communion is purely a matter for the governing bodies of the various Anglican Churches and that they are both morally and legally free to act as they think right. The Lambeth Conference neither has nor claims any authority over them, and if the C.I.P.B.C. was so imprudent as to act without consulting them it would have no ground for complaint if some of them disowned it. We must hope and pray that it will do no such thing.

IV. Relations with Presbyterians

I turn now to the section of the Report which is concerned with the Presbyterian Churches. Here, of course, notice is taken of the recent Anglican-Presbyterian discussions whose findings were presented to the Convocations and the General Assembly in May of last year. There is a very significant recommendation that, so far as Great Britain is concerned, the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches in Scotland should settle their relations by negotiation before the Church of England and the other Presbyterian Churches go any further. In view of the very negative reception which the matter has had throughout most of the Church of Scotland, the prospect does not seem very hopeful.

The Report contains a surprising and unqualified statement that 'the Anglican Churches ought to be ready to recognize the Presbyterian Churches as true parts of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that the spiritual effec-

tiveness of their ministerial orders ought not to be implicitly or explicitly questioned.' The ordinary man or woman may well wonder, on reading this, why on earth the Anglican and Presbyterian bodies are not in full communion. However, on the following page we are told that 'Anglicans conscientiously hold that the celebrant of the Eucharist should have been ordained by a bishop standing in the historic succession.' A member of the Committee is thus in the position of saying to a Presbyterian: 'Your Church is a true part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, but the Eucharist ought not to be celebrated by its ministers.' Presumably, therefore, the word 'true' in this context does not mean 'fully complete' but is compatible with 'radically defective.' Possibly the Committee had in mind the fact that modern Catholic theologians have recognized that membership of the Church is a highly analogical concept, whose modes and degrees need more exploration than they have yet received. One must, nevertheless, regret the Committee's neglect to define the sense in which it understood the word 'true,' for the ordinary person on reading the report is likely to be first misled and then completely baffled. It may be for this reason that 'the Conference,' in Resolution 27, took the safe course of 'commending the Report for wider study'; such study is indeed highly to be desired.

V. Conclusions and Suggestions

A number of interesting points arise in connection with the remaining parts of this section of the Lambeth Report, but they are of less importance than those which I have discussed. I shall therefore pass them over and simply inquire what emerges from this discussion.

First, I would suggest that we must urge our Fathers in God who were at Lambeth to express with complete frankness their individual convictions about the Resolutions which have gone out in the name of the Conference. It would be a pure affectation if one pretended not to know that many of them have gone away from Lambeth with grave misgivings about many of the Resolutions; one need only compare the Resolu-

tions with their known convictions and public utterances to be sure of this.

It will no doubt be maintained that, in loyalty to the Conference and for the sake of prestige, a façade of unanimity ought to be preserved, but I cannot see that any considerations of this kind can override a man's right and duty to witness to what he believes to be the truth. It is only too easy for a large, efficiently managed and overworked gathering to give its formal assent to propositions which many of its members will later on come to regret. The history of the Church is full of examples of this. The Council of Florence is a case in point. Like the Lambeth Conference of 1958, it met to consider the problem of Christian unity under a strong sense of urgency, due to the pressure upon the Christian community of increasingly menacing pagan forces. Even so it was less hurried than any Lambeth Conference, for it met over a period not of five weeks but of seven years. It produced schemes of union which were accepted not only by the Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox but also by the Jacobites, Mesopotamians, Chaldeans and Maronites, and within a few years the unions had collapsed as if they had never been. The lesson is plain for us to learn.

Secondly, we must do all in our power to ensure that, before the Ceylon and North India unions are inaugurated, the *Scheme* and the *Plan* in their final form are brought before the synods of the various Anglican provinces, not for hasty acceptance under pressure from above but for careful consideration in the light both of the theological principles involved and of the likely repercussions upon the life of the Anglican Churches. Some of the Anglican supporters of the proposed unions have declared that they are determined to get union in Ceylon and in India even if this should result in a breach of communion with their fellow Anglicans. I have myself been told by Anglicans that they would be quite prepared to drive other Anglicans like myself out of the Anglican Communion if by so doing they could get union with English Nonconformists. Such zeal as this I find fratricidal and horrifying; it is doing evil that good may come. I have worked

for over thirty years for rapprochement with the Eastern Churches, but if we could have full communion with them to-morrow at the expense of driving Evangelicals out of the Church of England I would resist it with all my might.

Thirdly, I suggest that we should do all that is in our power to resist the debasement of theological thought and language that has progressively taken place in reunion discussions. This has occurred in two ways. One is by the painstaking construction of statements, formulas and rites that are deliberately meant to be ambiguous; the unification ceremonies of the *Scheme* and the *Plan* contain outstanding examples of this. The other is by the substitution of vague terms of non-theological provenance for the precise terms of traditional theology. 'Enter into the spiritual heritage,' 'true parts of the Church,' 'spiritual effectiveness of ministerial orders'—such phrases as these have no recognized theological connotation and can therefore be interpreted by different people in different ways. What is at stake is something wider than any matter of ecclesiastical policy; it is nothing less than the function of human speech as the medium for the communication of truth. God has given us the power of speech and the gift of language in order that we shall be able to apprehend the truth ourselves and communicate it to others. The function of discourse is to clarify, not to confuse our thought; *distinguer pour unir*, not *confondre pour mélanger*. We are all of us to-day vividly aware of the violence to intellectual integrity that has taken place in the totalitarian states through the assumption that the purpose of language is not primarily to express the truth but to produce desired results; we can easily overlook the fact that 'double-think' has seriously invaded the realm of Christian life and in particular the area of reunion movements. I do not see how any man can engage for very long in the task of devising ambiguous forms of words without blunting his sense of the awful claims of truth.

It will, I think, have become clear that, in spite of the somewhat unrestrained praise which has been bestowed upon the Lambeth Conference Report by some of those who were most closely concerned in its production, I am gravely per-

turbed by some parts of it. I do not think we need despair. But I would beg our Fathers in God, as well as our brethren in the priesthood and the laity, not to gloss over its weaknesses in the cause of propaganda or to attribute to it a moral authority greater than that to which its intrinsic merits entitle it.